

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

? Do you know your neighbors? What is your relationship with them? If you don't know your neighbors, why not?

Luke 10:25-37 (NIV)

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by

Why the priest avoided helping the (potentially dead but only beaten) man:

Priests were not supposed to make themselves ceremonially unclean for anyone who dies except family (Leviticus 21:1–3). If he touched a corpse or even an item a corpse had touched, he was made unclean (Leviticus 22:4–7). If he was unclean, he couldn't eat the special priestly food or do his job serving God.

robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.

Strikes against the Samaritan:

The nation of Samaria started when the king of Assyria settled captured people in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites (2 Kings 17:24). They knew God's commands but did not follow them (2 Kings 17:34–41). The Jews were supposed to only go to one place of worship, the Temple in Jerusalem (Deut. 12:5–6). However, the Samaritans worshipped in Samaria. "Good Jews" shunned the Samaritans because of this.

³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Why the Levite avoided helping the (potentially dead but only beaten) man:
The Levites lived on the food that was made as offerings to God. The Lord was their inheritance, so they were considered especially holy and close to God. They got the firstfruit offerings, the best of everything, that was first offered to God. They could not eat that food if they were made unclean. (Deut. 19:1–5)

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

? What do you notice about the Samaritan's response to the man versus the priest's and the Levite's?

? How did the Samaritan go above and beyond for the man he was helping?

? In verse 29 the expert of the law asks Jesus "And who is my neighbor?" How do you think the man thought Jesus was going to answer?

? In response to "And who is my neighbor?", why does Jesus answer with this parable?

? What does "neighbor" mean? Who are our neighbors?

? At the end of the parable Jesus says, "Go and do likewise". What is he asking us to do?

? The man who was beaten really has no voice or agency in this story. It is not his words or response, but his “being”, the fact that he is someone who needs help, that makes him the neighbor. We don’t know anything about him except his circumstances. Why does that matter in the context of the parable?

? When reading the parable, it seems obvious that the priest and the Levite did not do the right thing, but they thought they were doing the right thing by avoiding the personal, social and physical consequences of helping the man. What kind of justifications do you use in your own life to avoid helping the people around you?

? In our own culture, do we avoid helping those in need who are “unclean” in our own context? What does this say about our own hearts?

For Discussion and Accountability

? Who is a “neighbor” that you feel God leading you to help or interact with? How will you take action on that this week?

? People (like the expert of the law in this passage) often come to Jesus trying to ask clever questions to make themselves look good, but most often Jesus turns it back around on them. When you examine your own heart, is there anything you feel self-righteous about? What would Jesus’ response to that self-righteousness be? How can you respond to Jesus with an open heart and mind to hear His guiding this week?